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E.O. 12958: N/A
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SUBJECT: BLUE LANTERN LEVEL 3: PRE-LICENSE CHECK ON
APPLICATION 050070744

REF: STATE 150486

¶11. (U) The following message reports the results of a pre-license check conducted by the Political/Economic section and the Office of Military Cooperation on reftel application.

¶12. (SBU) On November 7, Econoff met with Shanfari Group of Companies Projects Manager Bakheet Mattar Ahmed al-Shanfari to discuss the purchase of reftel items for the Royal Guard of Oman. Shanfari confirmed that his company was an agent for the Royal Guard, and produced the contract for the purchase of C15 (formerly OA-15) semi-automatic assault rifles, signed by Shanfari officials, Major General Khalifa bin Abdullah bin Said al-Junaibi of the Royal Guard, and representatives of Cerberus GmbH. Shanfari noted that the company would not be storing the weapons, but that they would immediately be taken into the Royal Guard's possession once they arrived at the airport. Shanfari produced the company's registration certificate from the Ministry of Commerce and Industry.

¶13. (SBU) On November 12, Major General Khalifa bin Abdullah bin Said al-Junaibi of the Royal Guard of Oman affirmed the reftel order to the Office of Military Cooperation and noted that the company was an official supplier for the organization. Junaibi stated that Shanfari Group of Companies, a "reputable group of companies in Oman," was Cerberus GmbH's local representative. The Royal Guard selected Cerberus' products on the basis of market research and tests, according to Junaibi.

¶14. (SBU) Comment: The Shanfari Group of Companies is a well-known trading house in Oman. The company was established in 1970 by Saeed bin Ahmed al-Shanfari, who previously served as the Minister of Oil and Gas and Minister of Agriculture and Fisheries. In addition to military sales, the company is involved in the construction, transport and logistics, manufacturing, and tourism sectors. It also serves as one of the representatives of the Jeep brand in Oman. The company's projects manager was open and upfront about the company's dealings with Cerberus, noting that it was selected for this order on the basis of its high-quality equipment. Shanfari understood the restrictions on United States Munitions List items, and appeared keen on ensuring that his company stayed clear of suspicious arms sales. End Comment.
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